

International Sociology

<http://iss.sagepub.com/>

Fragmented Community Action or New Social Movement? : A Study of Environmentalism in Jamaica

Patricia Lundy

International Sociology 1999 14: 83

DOI: 10.1177/0268580999014001005

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://iss.sagepub.com/content/14/1/83>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:



[International Sociological Association](#)

Additional services and information for *International Sociology* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://iss.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://iss.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations: <http://iss.sagepub.com/content/14/1/83.refs.html>

Fragmented Community Action or New Social Movement?

A Study of Environmentalism in Jamaica

Patricia Lundy

University of Ulster

abstract: Environmentalism is usually regarded as a 'First World' phenomenon associated with economic prosperity and rising living standards. This article examines environmentalism in the context of a 'Third World' country, Jamaica. While the tourist industry successfully promotes Jamaica as an unspoiled tropical holiday destination, the country faces serious environmental threats from industry, agriculture and from tourism itself. Structural adjustment and stabilization programmes have cut deeply into government expenditure with a consequence that environmental protection has low priority. However, in Jamaica social action has emerged in response to environmental problems. Groups have begun to organize at national, parish and community level and have become vehicles for citizens to lobby, protest and campaign on a number of pressing ecological issues. This article seeks to establish if the emerging social action is most accurately categorized as fragmented community action or whether it amounts to a new social movement. The factors which have shaped and influenced the development of the 'movement' are explored in the context of local, national and global processes which have given rise to the social action. The applicability of theories of new social movements in accounting for environmentalism in the 'Third World' is discussed.

keywords: environmentalism ♦ Jamaica ♦ NGOs ♦ social movements

International Sociology ♦ March 1999 ♦ Vol 14(1): 83–102
SAGE (London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi)
[0268-5809(199903)14:1;83–102;007885]

Introduction

Jamaica is a former British colony which gained independence in 1962. The island is located in the Greater Antilles, approximately 90 miles south of Cuba, 100 miles west of Haiti and 600 miles south of Miami. It is the third largest island in the Caribbean. The population in 1990 was estimated at 2.5 million, about 50 percent of whom live in urban areas. It is a small, dependent, capitalist economy based on agriculture, bauxite, tourism and light industry. A very large percentage of what Jamaica produces is exported rather than used locally, while a high proportion of what the society consumes is imported from abroad. Most Jamaicans are poor with an average GNP per head of approximately US\$1200. Moreover, income distribution is extremely uneven. According to World Bank estimates, the top 20 percent of the population account for more than 60 percent of income (World Bank, 1989).

Jamaica is now one of the most indebted countries in the world. The country's total external debt in 1991 was approximately US\$4.5 billion dollars. This amounts to US\$1800 for every man, woman and child on the island (Levitt, 1991). Jamaica's economy has been strongly affected by the recession and restructuring of the 1980s and 1990s. The international financial institutions imposed a 'shock treatment' of structural adjustment measures in the mid-1980s. Analysts have argued that IMF/World Bank inspired adjustment policies can damage the environment by encouraging export-led growth and forcing cuts in public spending on environmental protection (George, 1992; McAfee, 1991). Structural adjustment and stabilization programmes have cut deeply into government expenditure and have resulted in a deterioration in social services and a decline in the infrastructure (Levitt, 1991; Lundy, 1996). Environmental protection has a low priority.

The country suffers from a variety of environmental problems typical of undeveloped countries (Girvan and Simmons, 1991). These include high rates of deforestation (Eyre, 1990) and degradation of coastal ecosystems (Bacon, 1990). There is pollution of air, land and water by industrial and agricultural development. In particular, bauxite mining has caused considerable environmental damage (Silva, 1990; Coke et al., 1987). The need for foreign exchange earnings from tourism has led to the overexploitation of the country's natural landscape, even though the industry is based on the 'unspoiled beauty of the country's natural heritage' (Bell, 1990). Finally, the reduction in public expenditure have left sewage disposal plants in a state of disrepair (Lundy, 1993) promoting marine pollution and giving rise to concern about the spread of disease (Silva, 1991).

In response to the increasing ecological destruction, local communities and individuals have begun to protest and organize around environmental

concerns. This article seeks to establish whether the emerging social action can be categorized as an environmental movement and, if so, why this social phenomenon has emerged in Jamaica. The article begins with an overview of the evolution of environmentalism in Jamaica. The section which follows defines key characteristics of social movements. These are applied to Jamaican environmental groups to determine whether or not they can be termed a social movement. The final section of the article seeks to account for the emergence of the 'movement' and discusses the factors which have shaped and influenced its growth.

Methods

The article is based on research carried out on the island of Jamaica between June and September 1995. A total of 36 environmental groups were identified in parishes throughout Jamaica. In-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out with representatives from 23 of the 36 groups. A total of 56 formal interviews were conducted. The sample reflects the different types of groups operating at the community, parish and national level. Three organizations could not be located because of communication problems and representatives from the remaining groups declined to be interviewed, or alternatively interviews could not be arranged for other reasons. In addition to interviews with group members, a small number of interviews were carried out with representatives of international organizations involved in funding environmental groups and projects. A number of committee meetings, conferences, workshops and seminars held by the environmental groups were attended. During these events, time was spent in observation and many informal conversations with leaders and members of the groups occurred. An analysis of minutes of meetings, campaign literature, newsletters, annual reports and other relevant material was also undertaken.

Growth in Environmentalism

The research findings indicate that there is growing concern about environmental issues in Jamaica. This is signified by the rapid and significant growth in the number of environmental groups and the size of their membership. Prior to 1987 a relatively small number of environmental groups existed. Most of them were based at the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI) in Kingston, Jamaica and drew their small membership from the academic community. These groups included the Natural History Society of Jamaica (founded in 1940), the Geological Society of Jamaica (founded in 1956), Gosse Bird Club (founded in 1955) and Jamaica Geographical Society (date of foundation unknown). These

'traditional' environmental groups have been concerned with research, the publication of scientific journals, the hosting of local and international symposiums, and with education, recreation and scientific field excursions.

A notable development, however, has been the rapid growth in the number of environmental groups in Jamaica during the late 1980s and early 1990s. At least 28 environmental groups were formed between 1988 and 1995. The groups are based both in rural and in urban areas and their supporters and activists are often drawn from a common locality. A number of the groups are relatively small and have as few as a dozen or so members. There are, however, much larger groups, such as the Portland Environmental Protection Association (PEPA), which is made up of representatives from 41 civic groups, as well as individual members. In parallel with the growth in community and parish-based groups, a variety of national-level environmental organizations have also emerged.

The newly formed 'activist' groups are different from the longer established 'traditional' conservation groups. The membership base of many of the new groups is drawn from individual communities or parishes. Many of the new national-level groups have a similar ethos of community involvement and they attempt to work through existing community networks. The new groups are engaged in activities to influence, stimulate and promote environmental change. In membership, aims and activities they can be distinguished from the 'traditional' environmental groups. They are proactive in orientation and signify a new era of environmentalism in Jamaica.

However, some similarities remain. From membership records, discussions and observations, it is clear that the social base of both the newly formed 'activist' and 'traditional' environmental groups is overwhelmingly drawn from the middle classes and the better educated. Social scientists have noted that new social movements in the 'First World' draw their supporters from a similar social base (see, for example, Cotsgrove and Duff, 1980). In Jamaica, poorer communities and individuals within them (i.e. small farmers, fisherfolk, peasants) generally do not initiate environmental protest and social action. This is in contrast to other studies of 'Third World' countries, which indicate that poor individuals and poor communities have shown a strong interest in environmental issues (Gadgil and Guha, 1994; Utting, 1994). However, as I discuss shortly, the middle-class environmental activists are seeking to work with and organize and promote environmental awareness within poorer communities and groups.

Emergence of a New Social Movement?

Defining a Social Movement

It is generally agreed that in order for social action to constitute a social movement, a number of requirements must be met (Scott, 1990). Attempts

to define the concept often make reference to a number of features. These are cooperation, collective action, informal networks, shared goals, common identity and desire for social change (Diani, 1992). The concept, according to Diani (1992: 1), 'should be sharp enough to distinguish it from related concepts such as interest groups, political parties, protest events and coalitions'. In addition to desire for social change, as Raschke (quoted in Scott, 1990: 17) points out, a social movement intervenes in the process of social change. New social movements attempt to bring about social change through changing values and developing alternative lifestyles (Scott, 1990: 17).

In Jamaica, it was observed that environmental groups have been involved in a variety of activities and initiatives which were aimed at bringing about social change. From interviews, observation of activities and analysis of literature, it was apparent that they aimed to exert pressure for change in the attitudes, lifestyle and behaviour of the public. In addition they sought to change the behaviour of the private and public sectors towards the environment. They sought change through three inter-related sets of initiatives.

First, many of the environmental groups have promoted educational and awareness-raising campaigns via curriculum interventions, school competitions, seminars, conferences, field trips and summer camps. They have promoted their environmental message through use of the media, by sponsoring public competitions, organizing exhibitions, publishing literature and even creating children's board games. Jamaican music has a powerful cultural significance and often reflects current social and political concerns. In an effort to make the environmental message more accessible, groups have run innovative consciousness-raising programmes in local communities utilizing popular Jamaican music and humour in concerts and plays. Fun runs, public forums and calendar events such as Earth Day, World Environment Week and International Beach Clean-Up Day are also regularly staged by most of the environmental groups.

Second, in the formal political arena, environmental groups are actively seeking to change the government's attitude towards the environment and to influence policy. As Scott (1990: 152) points out, 'social movements effect change largely through influencing existing institutions of political intermediation', such as parliament, the media and political parties. In Jamaica they have done this through advocacy and lobbying and by achieving representation on government agencies and committees. Notable achievements have been the appointment of environmental representatives to sit on the board of the Natural Resource Conservation Authority (NRCA), which is the national environmental regulating agency. In addition they helped to bring about the establishment of a government/NGO Environmental Liaison Committee in 1993. Since 1994,

government policy documents and environmental legislation have been regularly reviewed by national quarterly meetings of environmental groups and recommendations submitted to the government. Environmental groups have lobbied government, protested and raised public awareness on issues concerning national parks and protected areas, deforestation, pesticide misuse, toxic waste, sewage disposal and overdevelopment in tourist enclaves.

A third initiative embarked on by environmental groups to bring about social change has been the development of community projects. Poorer communities affected most by environmental degradation have been encouraged to articulate their grievances and initiate projects to ameliorate their situation in collaboration with environmental groups. Among other things, these projects are concerned with rehabilitation initiatives such as tree-planting, conservation of fisheries, restoration of sewage disposal facilities and soil conservation. Examples of community environmental projects can be seen in the work of groups such as the South Coast Conservation Foundation (SCCF), Negril Environmental Protection Trust (NEPT) and the Community Environmental Resource Centre (CERC). These groups have worked with and helped organize diverse community groups, such as squatters, local fisherfolk, charcoal burners and small farmers.

The work of the SCCF, for example, has focused primarily on fishing communities in an effort to help resource user groups to organize and begin to address some of the concerns in their community. Community groups established with the assistance of SCCF receive training in meeting skills, fishing management and strategies, and assistance with writing funding proposals. Mangrove users have been exposed to education and training in mangrove ecology and in sustainable harvesting techniques. In addition, communities have participated in the SCCF's clean-up and tree-planting activities and have begun to raise community concerns relating to water and sanitation with local authorities. Community mobilization around environmental issues did not previously exist in these poor remote communities. However, the community groups seem to recognize advantage in alliances with environmental groups who have greater access to resources, state agencies and funding organizations. Utting (1994: 253) has noted a similar process in Central and South America where poor groups affected by deforestation are finding it easier to articulate and publicize their grievances by means of alliances with national-level, urban-based ecology groups.

From the evidence presented here it is clear that environmental groups are actively seeking to bring about social change through raising public awareness, by lobbying and by direct intervention in community projects. There are, however, other prerequisites which determine a social movement.

Cooperation, Collective Action and Shared Goals

New social movements (NSMs) are also defined in terms of organizational aspects. Cooperation, collective action and shared goals are said to be notable features of NSMs (Diani, 1992; McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Scott, 1990). From observation, interviews and review of literature it is clear that environmental groups in Jamaica exhibit these characteristics.

The Jamaican environmental movement is a diverse collection of evolving groups with varying interests, capabilities and degrees of sophistication. A number of the community and parish-based groups are organized in an ad hoc way around single issues, such as hotel developments, local pollution problems and local basic needs such as sewage, water and solid waste disposal. However, since their inception several community-based groups have evolved and moved beyond specific localized environmental issues. For example, the Portland Environmental Protection Association was initially set up by a handful of local people concerned about basic needs in the small town of Port Antonio. The organization now has a membership of over 300 and their agenda has moved far beyond local issues to include lobbying for national parks and protected areas and to halt the transportation of toxic waste in the region. PEPA members regularly attend national and regional events and have represented Jamaica at global conferences and workshops. Thus, for a number of the groups, the process of involvement has created a broadening of awareness. Indeed, despite the limited objectives and the localized nature of some community and parish-based groups, they have provided a basis for the development of a broader environmental movement in Jamaica.

In 1989 the National Environmental Societies Trust (NEST) was set up to act as an umbrella organization to 'strengthen the representative, organisational and operational effectiveness of environmental groups in Jamaica' (NEST, 1991). NEST has facilitated cooperation, collective action, networking and sharing of information between environmental groups locally and nationally. Through the organization's bimonthly newsletter, member groups are kept informed of NGO activities and national and global environmental matters. Through seminars, workshops and conferences, NEST has made a concerted effort to gain support and elicit views in an effort to shape a coherent strategy on specific issues. Groups scattered throughout the island come together at quarterly meetings to share information, discuss common problems and loosely agree on strategy. NEST has a current membership of 39 environmental groups and other organizations. Most of the Jamaican environmental groups are members of NEST. This, NEST claims, gives them a mandate to speak on behalf of the environmental movement.

Member groups of NEST have elected representatives to attend regional and international conferences. These included the United Nations

Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the UN Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island States held in Barbados in April 1994 and the Convention on Biological Diversity held in the Bahamas in November 1995. For these groups a coherent Jamaican environmental representation at international conferences and other events is of increasing importance. As noted in the editorial of NEST's newsletter,

If we have learnt only one thing it is that Jamaican NGOs need to be more active in the international environmental arena in which issues pertinent to Jamaica are discussed, where resolutions and treaties are passed and ratified that will have great impact on environmental policy and management decisions taken by world leaders. (NEST, 1994)

In this section of the article I set out to establish if an environmental movement has emerged in Jamaica. I did this by defining key characteristics of social movements and establishing if these were features of Jamaican environmental groups. It is clear from the discussion above that the activities of environmental groups amount to much more than spontaneous fragmented social action. Environmental groups were shown to be actively seeking to bring about social change through their educational, lobbying and community projects. Cooperation, collective action and shared goals were shown to be notable features of the groups. If one accepts that these characteristics distinguish a social movement, then it is the case that a new social movement has evolved in Jamaica.

Why Has the Movement Emerged?

Environmentalism is defined as one of the new social movements (Scott, 1990). The emergence of NSMs in the West has been explained in the context of social-structural changes, growth in the middle classes and postmaterialistic values (Cotsgrove, 1982; Inglehart, 1990; Lash and Urry, 1987; Milbrath, 1984; Lowe and Rudig, 1986). As Inglehart (1990: 45) notes, 'post-materialists emphasise fundamentally different value priorities from those that have dominated industrial society for many decades. They place less emphasis on economic growth and more emphasis upon non-economic quality of life. Their support for environmentalism reflects this concern.' Nash makes a similar observation, he states that, 'environmentalism is interpreted as a full stomach phenomenon, a direct consequence of economic affluence by which wilderness areas and clean air come to be cherished once basic needs have been fulfilled' (Nash, 1982; cited in Gadgil and Guha, 1994: 126). Therefore, according to NSM theories, environmentalism is likely to be a 'First World' phenomenon associated with a country's economic prosperity and rising living standards. In short, poor countries are unlikely to be interested in environmentalism.

Evidence from the research challenges these theoretical assumptions. As outlined earlier, Jamaica is an underdeveloped 'Third World' country. It cannot be described as 'postindustrial' and the majority of the population have not reached a satisfactory quality of life. Neither has Jamaica experienced a decline of the working class and rise of a new middle class which has taken place in western countries. According to NSM theory analysis, Jamaica, with its large rural and agricultural sector, impoverished population, small urban middle class and knowledge class, does not fit the profile of a country which would be likely to produce an environmental movement. However, the existence of an environmental movement in Jamaica challenges such assumptions. In order to account for the emergence of the Jamaican movement alternative circumstances need to be explored. It is important to be sensitive to local circumstances and social processes which shape and influence movement formation. Such processes may vary and cannot be taken as given. Each case is empirically different and broad theoretical generalizations should be avoided.

An obvious starting point for the foundation of an environmental movement is the existence of environmental problems. Social scientists have noted an association between the growth of environmental awareness and the nature and severity of a country's ecological problems (Yearley, 1995: 657). As discussed earlier, Jamaica suffers from a variety of environmental problems typical of underdeveloped countries. It is clear that increasing national ecological destruction has been a motivating factor in Jamaican activism. However, there is evidence to indicate that this is only one factor among others contributing to the development of environmentalism in Jamaica.

A further stimulus to ecological protest has been the globalization of environmental issues. Events and organizations in 'developed' countries have played a role in the spread of environmental awareness. These events and concerns are reflected in international and local media coverage of environmental disasters, and widespread publicity of international conferences and campaigns. As the chairperson of NEST reflected,

1992 has been a momentous year for environmental awareness, both in Jamaica and throughout the world. Victorian levels of industrial pollution in Eastern Europe, cancer blighted sheep in the Antipodes, and pesticide polluted streams in Portland [Jamaica] have all helped to move awareness of the environment onto everybody's Top Ten. . . . Internationally, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro forced media attention on environmental issues and raised the general level of awareness about local and international environmental problems. It is within this context of emerging awareness and action that NEST has had to focus its energies to meet the demands of its members and fulfill its mandate. (NEST, 1992b: 1)

A number of social scientists have commented on the important role of the media in bringing environmental issues to the forefront of the public's attention (Gadgil and Guha, 1994; McCormick, 1991; Yearley, 1991). Jamaica is a modernized country by 'Third World' standards and over the years there has been an expansion of access to the media. It has been estimated that 33 percent of the population have access to television (Stone, 1986: 123–4). The Jamaican middle classes are increasingly exposed to 'media imperialism' via cable television, a common feature of wealthier homes. Recently, the Jamaican media has stepped up its coverage of local and global environmental issues. An indication of the media's growing interest in the environment was a series of courses run by the Caribbean Institute of Mass Communications (CARIMAC) in 1991 and 1992. CARIMAC is the regional training institution for journalists and is part of the University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica. These courses were aimed at 'sensitising the media and environmentalists respectively to the needs and concerns of the other' (CARIMAC, 1991: 2).

All of the groups were in no doubt that the international and local media has played a significant role in raising and shaping environmental awareness, particularly among the Jamaican middle classes. In addition, local environmental groups are now more aware of the role of the media as a tool in stimulating environmental awareness. A number of the groups reported frequent use of radio, television and the press as a medium in environmental education projects and campaigns, and dissemination of information and ideas.

A further, and related stimulus has been the substantial influence of expatriates. Many of these individuals were attracted to Jamaica because of its rich natural environment and are committed to promoting its preservation. It was clear from interviews that their experiences had contributed to the shaping and forming of the environmental movement in Jamaica. Indeed, almost every environmental group had one or more expatriate as a member. These individuals were often prominent members of environmental groups and had on many occasions initiated their formation. However, there were mixed feelings across the interviews about this 'cultural imperialism'. As one activist commented,

Right now I think it has a too strong expatriate component. I feel a little bit uncomfortable about it. But a lot of these people's hearts are in the right place. They have been pioneering, they've been on the ground of a lot of things that's been happening. But it's not representative of the Jamaican people – it has in my view a disproportionate number of expatriates. We've come across problems where expatriates have wanted to represent Jamaica at international meetings [laughs].

Another contributing factor to the growth of environmental concern,

alluded to in interviews, was the influence of Jamaican citizens returning from years of migration. It was suggested that some of these individuals had also been exposed to environmentalism while working and studying abroad and had returned to Jamaica with a commitment to preserving their national heritage. The high number of migrants who were prominent activists in the environmental movement and who had been pioneers in establishing local environmental groups was notable. Therefore, the rise of the environmental movement in Jamaica has been directly influenced by a number of external forces, such as the environmental movement in the 'First World', the international media and the role of expatriates.

A further emerging theme in the research was that individuals had become involved in environmental activism in Jamaica because ecological destruction threatens their livelihoods. This was a notable factor in the emergence and development of environmental groups, particularly in tourist enclaves. Indeed, it has been argued that 'Third World' environmentalism is, for the most part, only another form of economic conflict (Gadgil and Guha, 1994: 133). Jamaica's economy depends heavily on tourism and this, in turn, is affected by the beauty of the island's coastal areas. Jamaica's tourism industry could not survive if the country were not known to possess attractive beaches, beautiful mountains and exotic flowers and plants.

It is no coincidence that many of the most active environmental groups are located in popular tourist enclaves in the parishes of St James, St Ann and Portland. Hoteliers, owners of small businesses, Tourist Board staff, commercial divers and other individuals related in one way or another to the tourist trade, are prominent members of environmental groups in these areas. The Negril Coral Reef Protection Association (NCRPA) and Negril Environmental Protection Trust (NEPT) were formed by commercial divers concerned about the destruction of the coral reef which they perceived as threatening their livelihood. Likewise, the Black River Environmental Protection Association (BEPA), PEPA and the numerous groups which have emerged in the parish of St James have a high percentage of members who are involved with the tourist industry. Interviewees alluded to the connection between tourism, environmentalism and livelihood concerns. As one activist commented,

In Negril there's definitely a very strong concern bound up with tourism. Because of course Negril is essentially a town which subsists entirely on tourism. And so they are worried about the environment because their livelihood depends on it. A large amount of our money is earned by tourism so people are going to be concerned about the environment on that basis, because very often they'll see tourism as the method by which they can – the only method sometimes by which they can – earn some money.

In addition, several environmental groups are located in tourist areas which have become the focus of recent national park and protected areas plans. The John Crow/Blue Mountain National Park and Montego Bay Marine Park are two recently established protected areas. Four proposed new protected areas have been selected for 'strategic intervention in the environment' (SITE) by USAID, namely the Cockpit country, Black River, Negril and Port Antonio. USAID has recently favoured 'partnerships' with local environmental NGOs and the Jamaican government in the co-management of national parks and nature reserves (USAID, 1995). As I discuss shortly, this has provided an impetus for environmental groups to be strengthened and formed in SITE areas.

Thus, for some individuals, there are perceived benefits and self-interest involved in the establishment of environmental NGOs and participation in the environmental movement. There is, of course, nothing new in this argument, a number of social scientists have indicated the centrality of the means/ends calculations and instrumental rationality in movement mobilization (see, for example, McCarthy and Zald, 1987). However, not all environmental activists are motivated by self-interest and livelihood concerns. Moreover, many 'Third World' countries and neighbouring islands in the Caribbean have vibrant tourism industries, have suffered similar patterns of environmental destruction and have been exposed to the environmental 'message'. Yet, to my knowledge, few of them have been inspired to act collectively on ecological issues. Therefore, the existence of environmental problems and self-interest alone are not enough to generate an environmental movement. Other social processes need to be considered.

There is considerable evidence to indicate that political exclusion is a key motivating factor in the development of the Jamaica environmental movement. A number of new social movement theorists highlight political exclusion as a motivating factor in western social movement formation (see Offe, 1987; Nedelmann, 1987; Tilly, 1978, 1984). In Jamaica the growth of environmentalism appears to be linked to a combination of factors. These are disillusionment with partisan politics, the exclusion of environmental interests from the polity and absence of ecological concerns from the 'development' process. According to Nedelmann (1987: 182),

... political parties are viewed as vital, if flawed, means of transmitting individual demands into the processes of political decision-making. In the absence of parties which can perform this function satisfactorily, social movements provide an alternative means for actors to aggregate and articulate interests and demands.

Evidence from interviews indicates that individuals have become dissatisfied with the ability of existing parties to articulate their interests and concerns. Social movements, including the environmental movement,

have emerged as a result. At a recent national environmental conference it was argued that,

Jamaica's people have become increasingly aware that they have to themselves become directly involved in governance, in the hope of ensuring that the policies and programmes pursued by the government (and private sector) also provide adequately for their welfare. This realisation is particularly evident in the rapid growth in the number and influence of environmental NGOs at both the parish and national levels, over the past ten years. (NEST, 1995: 1)

However, disillusionment and exclusion from the political process is intimately linked to the country's economic restructuring and the perceived failure of the nation's 'development' strategy. In the context of structural adjustment and the state's reduced role in social welfare provision, NGOs have come to occupy an important role in the Caribbean and Latin America (see, for example, Wedderburn, 1990: 153–74). In Jamaica, environmental groups have emerged because government can no longer provide certain basic services (water, sanitation, solid waste disposal, etc.). As one activist explained,

Because of the economic situation there are a lot of services that the government used to provide that would have kept some environmental problems in check. But because they no longer provide these services the problems have become greater. And now people realize that the government can't provide these services anymore, and it's going to affect their health, or, affect their children. So, basically they have to do something about it themselves. That's another significant influence that we sometimes forget, but it's there.

These sentiments were expressed across the spectrum of interviews. There was widespread agreement within the environmental movement regarding the failures of the present 'development' model. As one activist commented,

I think what's happening to us now is a direct result of the difficulties we've been facing with the whole IMF and the debt burden and the restructuring. The general feeling is that no political party is better than the other, that none of them have any programmes that will resolve the development issues we are facing. What you find happening is that those people who have the desire to do, you'll find them forming NGOs, or other action groups.

A further underlying factor shaping and stimulating environmental activism in Jamaica is the role of international NGOs and donor agencies. The importance of the European Union, for example, in promoting environmental change in Europe has been documented (McCormick, 1991). In Jamaica, environmental conferences, seminars and workshops have been organized by international organizations such as the Nature Conservancy (TNC) – a Washington-based environmental group – USAID and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). Participants

are invited to attend these events from a wide range of 'development' agencies, women's groups and community organizations. The courses have focused on how to establish an environmental group, leadership training, institutional strengthening, training trainers, project writing, strategic planning and promoting eco-tourism. According to activists interviewed, these activities have helped raise awareness, strengthened existing groups and stimulated the formation of new environmental groups. However, as environmental groups have evolved and the movement has become more self-confident, assistance from foreign donors is sometimes seen as interference. The following comment illustrates this point,

I don't have a problem with them [international agencies] assisting NGOs to develop. Because [we] got a lot of support in our early years from international organizations. And we accepted this. But I think the parting of the ways has come and we've decided we need to determine what we want to do and not have other people tell us.

However, equally significant in the emergence of the environmental movement in Jamaica is the availability of funding for environmental projects. Since the late 1980s, international institutions have been influential in affecting Jamaican environmental policies through loan conditionality. By the beginning of the 1990s the multilateral donors started to attach conditions to their loans which required the government to strengthen its environmental management framework. The bilateral donors provided grants to assist in the implementation of these changes (NEST, 1995: 3). As part of this process USAID has funded the DEMO (Development of Environmental Management Organizations) project. The DEMO project's mission is to assist in strengthening and developing environmental NGOs who will help in the co-management of protected areas (USAID, 1995). The Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCDT) and NEST have been targeted for substantial support under this project. In addition several other environmental groups are being institutionally strengthened in preparation for management responsibilities of Montego Bay Marine Park (MBMPT) and proposed protected areas in Negril (NCRPA, NEPT), Falmouth (the Trelawny Environmental Protection Association – TEPA), Port Antonio (PEPA), Portland Bight (SCCF) and Black River Lower Morass (BEPA). As mentioned earlier, there is evidence to suggest that a number of these groups were established in direct response to the prospect of DEMO and SITE assistance from USAID.

Across the range of my informants, there was general agreement that a major stimulus in the formation of environmental groups has been the availability of overseas funding. The following is a typical observation,

Some groups have been directly catalysed by the fact that there's money. There are organized groups that might not have been considered environmental and

might not have considered themselves environmental, because there's money available and because it fits in with a particular problem which might affect the community or another aspect of their work they are more interested in the environment now.

In 1989, Jamaica signed the first debt-for-nature swap in the English-speaking Caribbean. As part of the agreement US\$10 million was released to the newly established Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ) to provide grant financing for NGO environmental projects. EFJ, and most other funding agencies, give priority to programmes which are community based and involve community participation. However, some informants felt that this was itself a factor in the motivation to form environmental groups. As one activist cynically commented,

The word is out that EFJ has money for the environmental NGO community. There are people – and it's not for me to question their commitment – but because they know that they can access funds they now think of forming an NGO. This is what happens when donor agencies define an area for primary concentration and funds. Because we had it with women and development. It was relatively easy to get funds for women and development projects. Suddenly it's the environment. And it always seems to me there are a set of people who are into what's happening. You have the core committed set of people and you'll have those that are in it because it's happening. So I think the two combined will account for the extent of environmental groups.

Many other international organizations, such as the Canadian Green Fund, the World Wide Fund for Nature, USAID, the United Nations Development Programme and TNC have provided substantial funding and technical assistance for environmental projects during the 1980s and 1990s. It has been argued that environmental action in the 'Third World' is often related to 'basic needs' concerns (Leonard, 1981) and this is the case in Jamaica. With the government's inability to maintain and provide adequate sewage and waste disposal (Lundy, 1996; Silva, 1991), many local people have taken it upon themselves to initiate water, waste and sewage restoration projects. Environmental groups have been formed in order to access external funding to assist with the implementation of these 'basic needs' projects. There is little doubt that the growth of environmental groups is overwhelmingly associated with the availability of funding, whether their founders are interested in funding for the environment's sake or for its own sake.

Limitations on Environmental Action

Jamaican environmental groups have very few sources of income available to them. They are highly dependent on external aid. This dependency

has implications for the development and activities of environmental groups. International donors often determine the type of projects they are willing to fund. This may not necessarily be what local groups identify as priority. Moreover, dependency on foreign aid has, to a certain extent, compromised the independence of environmental groups. Project funding from international donors is subject to government approval. Environmentalists were reluctant to antagonize government, and foreign donors, for fear that their funding might be cut or withheld. This is exacerbated by the patron–client relationships which pervade Jamaican society. Activists pointed out that individuals or groups regarded as being troublesome could be ‘punished’ by government officials by withholding contracts, jobs and access to resources. Informants spoke of numerous cases where individuals had lost government contracts and job opportunities because of their outspokenness about ‘development’ projects. Added to this was fear for personal safety. Several activists referred to the recent murder in Jamaica of a leading environmentalist. This individual was allegedly killed for threatening to release damaging information about a company’s operations.

For these reasons the activities of environmental groups have been curtailed and certain pressing environmental problems have been avoided. Most notably, environmental groups have actively avoided challenging powerful business interests and government over industrial pollution. This is exacerbated by tensions between pursuing economic growth policies and environmental regulation. Jamaican activists were sensitive to criticisms raised in the local press that ‘environmentalists would rather protect nature for its aesthetic value than advocate much needed commercial ventures that will provide foreign exchange and jobs’ (NEST, 1992a). Consequently Jamaican groups were anxious not to be seen as anti-development. As one activist wrote, ‘if we want to advocate a moratorium on development, then we will forever be perceived as a lunatic fringe’ (NEST, 1992a). Thus, environmental groups in the ‘Third World’ may develop and operate under different circumstances from groups in the ‘First World’. Dependency on foreign aid, anxieties about ‘development’, clientelistic politics and fear for personal safety were shown to have curtailed the activities of environmental groups in Jamaica. It is clear that local circumstances shape, influence and constrain social action.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that an environmental movement has emerged in Jamaica. The existence of this movement challenges the notion that environmentalism is a ‘First World’ phenomenon and that poor countries do not get involved in ecology issues. However, as the article has

shown, it is the middle classes and the better educated who are overwhelmingly, although not exclusively, drawn to the Jamaican movement. As noted, this corresponds with research findings in 'First World' countries which suggest that environmentalism is an interest of the middle classes within richer countries. In contrast, environmental movements in 'Third World' countries such as India, Brazil, Malaysia and Kenya draw their support largely from 'markedly lower class constituencies' (Gadgil and Guha, 1994: 132). Therefore the social base of the Jamaican movement does not 'fit' the 'typical' profile of other environmental movements found in the 'Third World'.

NSM theories, which emphasize postmaterialistic values and social-structural changes, were shown to be of limited relevance in explaining the emergence of the environmental movement in Jamaica. It was argued that a combination of factors have influenced and shaped its development. These include the rise of environmentalism in the 'First World', the role of the media and the influence of expatriates. In particular, the role of overseas agencies and the availability of funding was found to be a major influence in stimulating the emergence and development of the Jamaican environmental movement.

In addition, it was suggested that environmental groups in the 'Third World' may operate under different circumstances from groups in the 'First World'. Anxieties about 'development', clientelistic politics, the risk of losing funding and fear for personal safety were shown to have curtailed the activities of environmental groups in Jamaica. A central argument advanced in the article is that NSM theories, constructed to account for environmentalism in the 'First World', tell us little about the social circumstances shaping environmentalism in the 'Third World'. Social researchers need to take account of local circumstances which shape, influence and curtail the activities of environmental groups in 'Third World' countries.

Note

Funding for this article was received from the British Academy and the Nuffield Foundation.

References

- Bacon, P. R. (1990) 'Coastal and Marine Resources Management in Jamaica', paper presented at the Consultation-Workshop on the National Conservation Strategy, Jamaica, 25–27 April.
- Bell, Y. (1990) 'Tourism and the Environment. Critical Measures for Sustaining Tourism and its Environment', paper presented at the Consultation-Workshop on the National Conservation Strategy, Jamaica, 25–27 April.

- Bragguley, Paul (1992) 'Social Change and the Middle Class and the Emergence of "New Social Movements"', *Sociological Review* 40(1): 27–48.
- Canada/Jamaica Green Fund Project (1995) information leaflet, Kingston, Jamaica.
- CARIMAC (Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication) (1991) *Environment: The Message and the Media, A Caribbean Perspective*. Kingston: CARIMAC, University of the West Indies, Jamaica.
- Coke, L. et al. (1987) 'Environmental Impact of Bauxite Mining and Processing in Jamaica', *Social and Economic Studies* 36(1): 289–333.
- Cotsgrove, S. (1982) *Catastrophe or Cornucopia: The Environment, Politics and the Future*. Chichester: John Wiley.
- Cotsgrove, S. and Duff, A. (1980) 'Environmentalism, Middle Class Radicalism and Politics', *The Sociological Review* 28(2): 333–51.
- Diani, M. (1992) 'The Concept of Social Movement', *The Sociological Review* 40(1): 1–25.
- Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (1995) information leaflet, Kingston, Jamaica.
- Eyre, L. A. (1990) 'Forestry and Watershed Management', paper presented at the Consultation-Workshop on the National Conservation Strategy, Jamaica, 25–27 April.
- Gadgil, M. and Guha, R. (1994) 'Ecological Conflicts and the Environmental Movement in India', *Development and Change* 25: 101–36.
- George, S. (1992) *The Debt Boomerang: How Third World Debt Harms Us All*. London: Pluto Press.
- Girvan, N. and Simmons, D. A., eds (1991) *Caribbean Ecology and Economics*. Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, Jamaica.
- Inglehart, R. (1990) 'Values, Ideology, and Cognitive Mobilisation in New Social Movements', in R. J. Dalton and M. Kuechler (eds) *Challenging the Political Order*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Lash, S. and Urry, J. (1987) *The End of Organised Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Leonard, H. J. (1981) 'The Emergence of Environmental Concern in Developing Countries', *Stanford Journal of International Law* 17: 281–313.
- Levitt, K. P. (1991) *The Origins and Consequences of Jamaica's Debt Crisis 1970–1990*. Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, Jamaica.
- Lowe, P. and Rudig, W. (1986) 'Review Article: Political Ecology and the Social Sciences – The State of the Art', *British Journal of Political Science* 16: 513–50.
- Lundy, P. (1993) 'The Political Economy of Health in Jamaica', unpublished PhD thesis, Queen's University, Belfast, Ireland.
- Lundy, P. (1996) 'Limitations of Quantitative Research in the Study of Structural Adjustment in Jamaica', *Social Science and Medicine* 42(3): 313–24.
- McAfee, K. (1991) *Storm Signals: Structural Adjustment and Development Alternatives in the Caribbean*. London: Zed Books.
- McCarthy, J. D. and Zald, M. N. (1977) 'Resource Mobilisation and Social Movements: A Partial Theory', *American Journal of Sociology* 82: 1212–41.

- McCarthy, J. D. and Zald, M. N. (1987) 'Resource Mobilisation and Social Movements', in M. N. Zald and J. D. McCarthy (eds) *Social Movements in an Organised Society*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.
- McCormick, J. (1991) *British Politics and the Environment*. London: Earthscan.
- Milbrath, L. W. (1984) *Environmentalists: Vanguard for a New Society*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Nedelmann, B. (1987) 'Individuals and Parties: Changes in Processes of Political Mobilisation', *European Sociology Review* 3(3): 181–202.
- NEST (National Environmental Societies Trust) (1991) *Living in Harmony with Nature*. Kingston: NEST.
- NEST (National Environmental Societies Trust) (1992a) *Chirpings* (NEST newsletter) July.
- NEST (National Environmental Societies Trust) (1992b) *Annual Report*. Kingston: NEST.
- NEST (National Environmental Societies Trust) (1994) *Chirpings* (NEST newsletter) March.
- NEST (National Environmental Societies Trust) (1995) 'Jamaican ENGOs and the State: The Co-Management Option', discussion paper presented at the 3rd National Quarterly ENGO Forum, Bluefields, Jamaica, 2–3 September.
- NRCA (National Resource Conservation Authority) and ECD (Environmental Control Division) (1991) 'Final Draft Report, Inventory of Domestic, Industrial and Agricultural Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution in Jamaica', ECD, Kingston, Jamaica.
- Offe, C. (1987) 'Changing Boundaries of Institutional Politics: Social Movements Since the 1960s', in C. S. Maier (ed.) *Changing Boundaries of the Political*, pp. 63–106. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scott, A. (1990) *Ideology and the New Social Movements*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Silva, H. (1990) 'Solid Waste, Toxic Waste and Air Pollution', unpublished report, Ministry of Health, Environmental Control Division, Jamaica.
- Silva, H. (1991) 'Can the Kingston Harbour be Saved?' unpublished report, Ministry of Health, Environmental Control Division, Jamaica.
- Stone, C. (1986) *Class, State and Democracy in Jamaica*. New York: Praeger.
- Tilly, C. (1978) *From Mobilisation to Revolution*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Tilly, C. (1984) 'Social Movements and National Politics', in C. Bright and S. Harding (eds) *State-Making and Social Movements: Essays in History and Theory*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- USAID (1995) 'Development of Environmental Management Organisations, PARC II Component', Project Paper Supplement, USAID, Jamaica.
- Utting, P. (1994) 'Social and Political Dimensions of Environmental Protection in Central America', *Development and Change* 25: 231–59.
- Wedderburn, J. (1990) *Integration and Participatory Development: Selected Papers and Proceedings of the Second Conference of Caribbean Economists*. Kingston: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
- World Bank (1989) *Jamaica: Adjustment Under Changing Economic Conditions*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Yearley, S. (1991) *The Green Case*. London: HarperCollins.
- Yearley, S. (1995) 'The Social Shaping of the Environmental Movement in Ireland',

in P. Clancy et al. (eds) *Irish Society: Sociological Perspectives*, pp. 652–74. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Biographical Note: Patricia Lundy is a Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland. Her main research interests are in the sociology of development and specifically in structural adjustment policies, environmentalism, social and political aspects of protected areas and Irish overseas development aid.

Address: University of Ulster, School of Social and Community Sciences, Magee College, Northland Road, Derry, Northern Ireland BT48 7JL, UK.
[email: p.lundy@culst.ac.uk]